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FOREST SCENE IN MORVAN.

THE FOREST OF MORVAN, IN FRANCE.

THE forest of Morvan is a district extending over the three departments of Nièvre, Yonne, and Saône-et-Loire. The subterranean revolutions to which it has been subject have impressed a marked character upon its soil. Abrupt rocks, which have been forced up by an enormous power, seem to dart their sharp-pointed tops towards heaven. Amid these rocks are enclosed meadows which, like the surrounding hills, are thickly overgrown with wood. In all these parts nature presents a bold and solemn aspect. The villages are arranged in a picturesque manner on the sides of the hills or in the depths of valleys. Numerous paths, though but little frequented, winding round the hills and through the country, give it an air of modern life which was altogether unknown to it thirty years ago. Still, it is only the great centres of population that have profited by the change which has taken place in the state of society within that period. The Morvan rustic still drives the old antiquated chariot with its four wheels without tire. His oxen, with their long horns, as represented in the accompanying engraving, remind one of those of ancient Rome. He still sings his old laments in a slow and measured strain, just as his ancestors did for ages before him. If he meets a stranger, he salutes him in an inquisitive way with his large hat; and if the latter asks him the way, he tells him with a saucy look, that he knows it as well as himself.

The Morvan women wear short and scanty petticoats. They have their hair twisted behind, and covered with flying ribands of lively colours; which gives them a certain coquettish air that is by no means displeasing. When the young villagers dance one of those boree dances which have delighted generations long gone by, accompanied by the monotonous moaning of the bagpipe, it is surprising what enthusiasm they display.

On leaving the road from Lyons to Avallon, a pretty town in the department of Yonne, as you enter the district of Morvan, you come to the market-town of Quarré-les-Tombes, formerly the barony of the illustrious knights of Chastellux, whose castle stands not many miles off, like an eagle's nest on the hill, surrounded with thick woods, carrying the observer's thoughts back to the stormy times of the feudal wars. Quarré owes its name to a collection of stone tombs, destined, according to some authors, for the uses of the rich Gallic Romans of the district. The cemetery is still covered with

these tombs, many of which are empty. Every grave recently filled is ornamented with a stone monument, of which there are more than a hundred and fifty altogether.

The most important places in Morvan Proper are Lormes, Corbigny, Montsauche, and Château Chinon, small towns in the department of Nièvre. From the top of the mountain upon which the church of Lormes stands, the view extends over a distance of more than thirty miles all round. The waters of the stream at Lormes, issuing from a large pond, or, we might almost say, lake, are precipitated with great force in foaming cascades from the higher level.

Château Chinon, which was known to the Romans, still exhibits the ruins of a feudal castle. Mount Beuvray, celebrated in the legends of this district, was one of the central points of the ancient Ædui. Vestiges of a camp may still be seen there, and several Roman roads meet at this point. The warm springs at St. Honoré, which were highly esteemed by the Roman conquerors of the Gauls, enjoy no mean reputation in the present day.

The principal occupation of the inhabitants of this part of France now consists of breeding cattle and working in the woods. Buckwheat, rye, and barley, form their chief supplies of food, from which they manufacture black bread. But in some parts, which are more favoured by nature, fine wheat is produced in abundance. There is an old proverb which says, that from Morvan comes neither a good wind nor good people. The latter part of the proverb is probably owing to the destructive ravages formerly committed by the warlike Ædui, who, issuing from their mountainous abodes, massacred all whom they encountered without any touch of pity or remorse. The civilisation of Christian times has, in a great measure, softened the ancient ferocity of their character; but the rudeness which is inherent, so to speak, in mountainous districts, still remains in the villages. The peasantry are obstinate and quarrelsome. Rather than yield a single iota of a disputed claim, they will make a sacrifice of ten times the value. As to the wind from Morvan, that is, of course, pretty much the same as it always was; and when, in the early part of the year, it blows from the south-west over the mountains covered with three feet of snow, it comes upon the valleys of Yonne and Cote-d'Or with a cutting and destructive keenness.

THE DEAD BRIDAL.

A VENETIAN TALE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

BY JONATHAN FREKE SLINGSBY.

CONCLUSION.

It was one of those delicious days in autumn, when the heat of the sun is tempered by the fresh breeze and the gray clouds that steal athwart the blue of the heavens. In the balcony of the palazzo upon the Adriatic, of which we have already made mention in our tale, two persons were sitting enjoying the cool sea-air, and conversing.

"How tranquilly yon bright water slumbers in the sunlight," said one of the two to his companion. "Who would ever think that not long since it was tossing to and fro in troublous billows? And just such is life. Ah, may ours, after the sorrows and trials which we have so lately endured, be henceforth peaceful and filled with sunshine, dearest Bianca."

The girl looked up tenderly at her lover. The traces of sickness had not yet altogether departed from her face, for her cheek was pale and her eye somewhat languid, but these enhanced rather than impaired her loveliness.

"Heaven grant that it may be so, dear Giulio. Heaven has been very merciful to me, first in saving me from a union that would have been worse than death, and next in preserving me through that terrible malady, which was fatal to my poor maiden Giovanna. Do you know, Giulio, it is a very singular fact that we were both born on the same day and hour."

Giulio remained silent for a time, as in deep thought; at length he said:—

"Dost thou remember the prophecy of the man with the rebeck in the gondola, that thou told'st me of?"

"Oh, yes! I have never forgotten it. How strangely true, in words, has it proved; yet how different in sense to what I feared. The bridegroom came indeed, and death entered in with him—but thou wert not the bridegroom, nor I the victim!"

"Well, thou must know that I too have encountered this diviner, and he has spoken strange and terrible things to me—a part of it still weighs painfully on my heart—that which he predicted when first I saw him. Yet do I hope that what I applied to myself was addressed to my companion; the rest has, I now perceive, received its fulfilment, for it related, not to thee, as I supposed, but to the poor girl thy attendant."

And Giulio then related his interview with the astrologer upon the evening of Giovanna's death.

"And now, dearest Bianca," continued he, "I have come to advertise thee that thou art to have an unwonted visitor to-day."

"Who may it be, Giulio? Thou knowest, that since my illness, I have received no one save thy father."

"Well, he comes by my father's permission, who will be